



March 19, 2024

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

TO: Jennifer A. Jenkins
Council Administrator

Colette R. Gresham, Esq.
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: David Williams 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CR-006-2024 Healthy Food in Prince George's County Correctional Facilities Task Force

CR-006-2024 (*Proposed and introduced by:* Council Members Oriadha, Blegay, Watson, Olson, Ivey, Burroughs, Hawkins, Dernoga and Franklin)

Assigned to the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE HEALTHY FOOD IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES TASK FORCE for the purpose of creating a task force that will recommend to the County Council, sitting as the Board of Health, and eventually the State of Maryland Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards, nutritional, food safety, and other standards suitable for the correctional facility meal program that support the health, well-being, and religious and cultural identities of detained individuals and incarcerated individuals, align with the GFPP (Center for Good Food Purchasing's Good Food Purchasing Program) core values, meet or exceed the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and consider the daily caloric intake and serving size needs of the populations served.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Additional administrative costs will be incurred for staffing this task force.

Revenues: No anticipated revenue impact.

Indirect Impact:

Likely favorable.

Legislative Summary:

CR-006-2024, proposed by Council Member Oriadha, was introduced by Council Members Oriadha, Blegay, Watson, Olson, Ivey, Burroughs, Hawkins, Dernoga and Franklin on February 13, 2024, and referred to the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee. CR-006-2024 would establish a task force to provide recommendations to the County Council sitting as the Board of Health, the State of Maryland Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, and the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards. The recommendations will be to develop and implement a comprehensive meal program for incarcerated individuals. The guidelines for this meal program will align with the Center for Good Food Purchasing's Good Purchasing Program and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The task force will be composed of 14 members to be appointed by the County Council Chair, Council, and County Executive.

Current Law/Background:

Section 506 of the Charter of Prince George's County, Maryland, authorizes the County Council or the County Executive to appoint for specific periods, temporary advisory boards that shall assist with the consideration and development of policies and/or programs.¹

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

According to a 2018 interview with Maria Maximo-Sabundayo, Deputy Chief of Food Services for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the state's average expenditure on a single inmate's daily raw food is \$3.83 as of 2018. This equates to an average of \$1.28 per inmate per meal.² Nutritional service standards within the Maryland correctional system

¹ Prince George's County Charter-[Section 506](#)

²Maximo-Sabundayo, Maria. Interview by Kanav Kathuria. 6776 Reisterstown Rd #309, Baltimore, MD 21215. July 26, 2018

are set by the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.³ Cost cutting practices and insufficient staffing have resulted in food sanitation challenges and reduced nutritional quality. Conversely, this cost cutting may actually cost agencies in the long run as poor nutrition can result in increased expenditures for carceral healthcare with ethnic minorities being acutely impacted.⁴ Research has shown that inmates gain weight over the course of their sentence and quality of food is cited as a contributory factor.⁵

The County has a concern that the current meal program does not provide adequate nutritional support/food safety to the inmate population at the County's Adult Detention Center. This inadequate nutrition program has exacerbated health outcomes for incarcerated individuals, thereby leading to larger County expenditures on carceral healthcare. This task force will be composed of individuals with subject matter expertise in the applicable areas pertaining to the bill and will advise the County Council and applicable state bodies on reforms to the current nutrition program implemented within Prince George's County detention facilities. The Center For Good Food Purchasing's Good Food Purchasing Program will serve as the procurement framework used for nutritional recommendations to ensure improved food safety and nutritional quality standards. This task force is mandated to deliver its recommendations to the County Council, sitting as the Board of Health no later than one year after it is convened.

There has also been concern expressed at the State level around the standards of food provided to individuals incarcerated in Maryland correctional facilities. Currently, State law, regulations, and administrative documents govern inmate food service. In 2022 and 2023, the Maryland General Assembly considered legislation⁶ that would have required the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, with the advice of the Secretary of Health, to update the minimum mandatory standards for inmate food services at least every five years. The proposed legislation also would have established a Correctional Facilities Health and Wellness Pilot Program, the stated purpose of which is to establish minimum mandatory standards for inmate food services.

Fiscal Impact:

Direct Impact

Adoption of CR-006-2024 will likely have a small adverse fiscal impact, requiring some administrative expenditures for staffing and technical supplies for operations. It is expected that this additional cost, as with other Council-created task forces, will be absorbed by the existing legislative branch budget.

³ Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services- [Standards Manual](#)

⁴ Center for Science in the Public Interest- [public health implications](#)

⁵ Prison Policy Initiative- [Food for thought: Prison food is a public health problem](#)

⁶ See [HB1352 \(2022\)](#) and [HB0059 \(2023\)](#). There is not similar legislation proposed.

Indirect Impact

Adoption of CR-006-2024 may have a favorable indirect fiscal impact as improvements to the nutritional framework may reduce County expenditures on carceral healthcare over time.

Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget

No.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

The proposed Legislation shall be effective on the date of adoption.

If you require additional information or have questions about this fiscal impact, statement, please contact me.